

## Message Text

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TO USINFO WASHDC PRIORITY

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AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMCONSUL DHAHRAN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

UNCLAS JIDDA 4639

USIAC

E.O.: 11652: N/A

SUBJ: PRESS REACTION ON TRANSFER OF PRESIDENCY

SUMMARY: FRIDAY AND SATURDAY MEDIA FEATURE NEWS OF NIXON RESIGNATION AND FORD SUCCESSION AS PRESIDENT. COMMENTARY RANGED FROM DOUBTS ABOUT THE CONTINUATION OF U.S. PEACE INITIATIVES IN THE AREA TO LINKING OF NIXON'S DEMISE WITH ISRAELI TROOP MOBILIZATION. END SUMMARY.

1. RADIO AND TV ON FRIDAY WITH THE PRESS FOLLOWING WITH BANNER HEADLINES ON SATURDAY FEATURED THE RESIGNATION OF PRESIDENT NIXON AND GERALD FORD'S SUCCESSION AS PRESIDENT. BOTH UKAZ AND AL MADINA CARRIED NIXON'S RESIGNATION SPEECH IN FULL. IN A SECONDARY STORY UNDER THE HEADLINE "FORD IS REQUESTED TO HEAL AMERICA'S WOUNDS AND REGAIN PRESIDENTIAL CONFIDENCE," UKAZ RAN A WIRE STORY THAT SPECULATED ROCKEFELLAR MIGHT BECOME VICE PRESIDENT AND THAT RICHARDSON AND LAIRD MIGHT JOIN THE NEW ADMINISTRATION. KISSINGER'S RETENTION WAS CONFIRMED.

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2. IN AL MADINA, FOREIGN AFFAIRS EDITOR AHMAD MUHAMMAD

MAHMOUD REFLECTED ARAB UNEASINESS ABOUT THE CONTINUITY OF U.S. FOREIGN POLICY, WITH SYMPATHY FOR NIXON'S PLIGHT. "NIXON'S COLLAPSE IS PROOF THAT STRONG MEN AS WELL AS STRONG NATIONS CAN NOT ALWAYS BE PRESERVED; THEY ARE EXPOSED TO COLLAPSE FROM THE TRIVIAL AS WELL AS FROM SUBSTANTIAL REASONS.

3. "NIXON'S DEPARTURE MIGHT MEAN SOMETHING TO THE ARABS... THOSE WHO SEE THAT NIXON HAD BEEN ARABIZED AND HAD BEGUN TO ADOPT A MORE BALANCED POLICY TOWARD THE ARAB ISSUE WILL NOT DOUBT BE MOVED BY HIS DEPARTURE, BUT THEIR SORROW WILL NOT BE SO DEEP THAT THEY WILL CRY BECAUSE THEY HAVE NOT YET FORGOTTEN HIS PAST PRO-ISRAELI POLICY.

4. "HOWEVER, ARABS WILL REMEMBER THAT NIXON DID TRY TO CHANGE SOMEWHAT THE PATH OF U.S. POLICY TOWARDS THE ARABS, BUT THAT THIS CHANGE IS NOW IN JEOPARDY, AS WE MIGHT WITNESS A BITTER ERA OF U.S. FRIENDSHIP FOR ISRAEL FROM A PRESIDENT WHO HAS BEEN ACQUAINTED WITH SUPPORT FOR ZIONISM.

5. "UNDOUBTEDLY NIXON'S DEPARTURE WILL HAVE MOST EFFECT ON THE MOST RECENT DEVELOPMENTS CONNECTED WITH HIM, PARTICULARLY THE PEACE EFFORTS IN THE MIDDLE EAST. ALTHOUGH CONGRESSIONAL LEADERS AGREE WITH KISSINGER THAT U.S. FOREIGN POLICY ENJOYS THE SUPPORT OF THE LEGISLATIVE BODY, NIXON'S DEPARTURE AND THE ARRIVAL OF ANOTHER MAN MEAN MANY THINGS FOR THOSE POLICIES.

6. "MOST OFTEN THE GENERAL ARAB REACTION FOR NIXON'S DEPARTURE WILL NOT BE EMOTIONAL--THAT ARABS WOULD BE MORE AMERICAN THAN THE AMERICANS THEMSELVES--BUT IT WILL BE AN EXACTING LOOK AT THIS DANGEROUS CHANGE AND THE ATTEMPT TO LIVE WITH AND BE FAMILIAR WITH THIS CHANGING OF LEADERS AND WHAT FOLLOWS...THE IMPORTANT THING IS WHAT THE AMERICAN CHANGE WILL BE FOR THE ARABS AND IN WHICH DIRECTION IT WILL GO DURING A STAGE WHEN THE M.E. ISSUE HAS BECOME MORE CLEAR FOR AMERICA AND AMERICANS THAN AT ANY OTHER TIME."

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7. NADWA'S EDITOR IN CHIEF REALTED THE DEMISE OF PRESIDENT NIXON TO ISRAELI MILITARY MOBILIZATION. "TODAY WE RECEIVED NEWS OF ISRAELI MILITARY BUILDUP IN SINAI--THE SAME DAY OF NIXON'S RESIGNATION WITH ALL ITS PORTENT FOR THE (DISENGAGEMENT) AGREEMENTS AND THE FUTURE OF THE MIDDLE EAST IN GENERAL. ZIONISM AND ISRAEL WERE WAGING A BATTLE INSIDE AMERICA...AND TODAY ISRAEL CONTINUES THE BATTLE HERE IN THE MIDDLE EAST AFTER SHE HAS WON THE

BATTLE IN WASHINGTON."  
SMITH

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